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I N D O L E N C E :

A

P O E M.

B Y

The AUTHOR of ALMIDA.

L O N D O N :

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INDOLENCE:

A

P O E M.

LET loftier Poets touch a bolder string,
Hail, INDOLENCE, thy powerful charms I sing;
In soothing strains majestically flow,
O teach these numbers without art to flow!
May they steal gently thro' each tranquil breast,
And lull by soft degrees the Soul to rest.

Bear me, O Muse! to some sequester'd Scene,
Where Meditation dwells, with eye serene;
Let Indolence prepare her placid Charms,
And elbow Chairs extend their willing arms;

Let

Let the soft Down in swelling Cushions spread,
Support elastic the reclining head,
And Books appear, an ample various pile,
To feast the Mind without the Body's toil.

There free from Rumour, and from anxious strife,
Let me glide gently down the Stream of life,
Hear, as from far, the human tempest beat ;
Escap'd and shelter'd in my calm Retreat,
From Pride's bold wish, Ambition's ardent claim,
The gusts of Passion, and the thirst of Fame.

And say ye Wise of this enlighten'd Age,
Poets, or Moralists, Divine, or Sage ;
Ye thinking, acting, philosophic Crew,
Who different follies, different ways pursue ;
What is the prize ye all push on to seize,
What but repose at last, and purchas'd ease ?
Latent in every breast this passion lies,
It prompts the Brave, the Silly, and the Wise ;

Th

The Warrior owns it in the noisy Camp,
Pale Students court it o'er the midnight lamp :
'Tis imagin'd too in Nature's general doom,
A weary day, that closes in the Tomb !

Lured by the hope of Glory, or of Wealth,
Man risks the first of blessings, Life and Health ;
Insatiate still, he seeks some absent good,
Dares the rough Desert, or the treach'rous Flood ;
Nor fears, by Hope's deceitful Voice led on,
Zembla's cold Blast, or Afric's raging Sun :
Where Ethiopia's putrid fens exhale,
The sudden death, in each infected gale,
Fearless he treads, imbibes the fetid steam,
Then sinks at once, and ends the busy dream.

O Indolence ! thou balm by Heav'n design'd
To quench the raging passions of the mind ;
Would toiling mortals thy soft influence own,
What shining mischiefs had remain'd undone !

Spain's ardent Sons, had not in quest of Ore,
Sought with advent'rous feet, that peaceful Shore,
Where Incas dwelt, the gentlest of mankind,
And simple faith, to guiltless manners join'd ;
Till Europe's Chiefs, by Crimes to them unknown,
Dragg'd the Peruvian Monarch from his Throne,
Spread death and rapine thro' th' affrighted land,
And impious ! boasted it was Heav'n's command.

In every age the Wife, a chosen train,
O sacred Peace ! have hail'd thy golden reign ;
Even the stern Stoic plann'd for this his Rules,
And Grecian eloquence inspir'd her Schools ;
In floth supreme the Epicurean Gods,
Supinely happy in their blest abodes,
Left human things at random Chance to go,
And scorn'd the plague of ruling aught below.

Behold ! the Convent's stately Walls arise,
Its spacious Columns tow'ring to the Skies :

There

There Laziness in faintly triumph dwells,
And rules obedient Hermits, in their Cells.
There the rich Abbot, free from every Care,
In haste to dine, breaks the unfinish'd pray'r ;
Tired with the labour of a long repast,
On some soft Couch, his weary limbs are cast :
Stretch'd in voluptuous dignity he lies,
Thrones, Mitres, Titles, swim before his eyes ;
Or sounds seraphic tremble in his ears,
The Angel's Song ; the Music of the Spheres.
No anxious thought disturbs the soft Repose,
Deep on his Cheek the living Crimson glows ;
Health's freshest bloom, enlivens all his frame,
And round his temples, plays the smiling dream.
Far from the reach of human hopes, or fears,
No Orphan's cry, no Widow's moan he hears ;
In him no sigh, th' idea sad creates,
Of falling Nations, or of ruin'd States :

Wrapt

Wrapt in indifference, and in pious pride,
Pray'rs, Sleep, and Eating all his hours divide.

By Nature's hand deep grav'd in every breast,
Springs native Indolence and love of rest.
Stretch'd to the North, where frigid Greenland lies,
Shivering and bleak, beneath inclement skies ;
Urg'd by Necessity's severe commands,
On the lone rock, the pensive Savage stands ;
A wild and cheerless prospect lies around,
Of naked Cliffs with gelid horrors crown'd ;
'Tis not the barren landscape gives him pain,
Winter's stern Child ! he mocks its fiercest reign :
He sighs to view the labour of the day,
To earn with weary steps, a scanty prey ;
At eve returning with his shaggy Spoil,
Content he sings, nor thinks of future toil ;

Hunger

Hunger his food, fatigue his bed prepares,
And Sleep profound, obliterates all his Cares*.

What are the charms of greatness, love, or power?
A moment's joy, the triumph of an hour:
All that Prosperity's wide wish attains,
What Fancy grasps at, or what Luck obtains,
Are cheating pleasures: Indolence alone,
Thro' Life insures Felicity our own.

All human baubles are too dearly bought,
That shake our peace, or prompt th' uneasy thought;
While the warm hope we form, the future Scheme,
Death hovers round, and mocks the transient dream;

* Their disposition seems to be a compound of the sanguine and phlegmatic. In the morning, when they stand silent, and pensive upon some eminence, and take a survey of the ocean and the weather, they appear melancholy and dejected, because the labours and the danger of the day stand in prospect before them: But when they return at night, especially if they have been successful, they are cheerful, and conversable.

History of Greenland, by DAVID CRANTZ.

Pale-eyed Oblivion follows at his side,
And sinks to dust, whole Mountains rais'd by Pride.

Say, why should Fame the Sage's wish engage ?

A vain existence in another age :

Can those fair Wreaths that deck the Hero's Tomb,
Clear the drear void, or animate its gloom ?

Sacred to Worth, or rais'd by Friendship's hand,

In silent eloquence cold Statues stand ;

Far more persuasive are the Truths they teach,

Than all the pomp Expression's art can reach ;

The sculptur'd lesson preaches to the eye,

Points out the long repose, and shews it nigh ;

For fancied blessings, bids us cease to slave,

Fame's loudest trumpet cannot reach the grave.

Even those with Heav'n's distinguish'd gifts endued,

Arc scann'd by Censure, or by Hate pursued :

Safe from the tempest's blast, or bruising hail,

Blows the low Violet in the shadow'd vale ;

While

While the tall Cypress, or the lofty Oak,
Brave the red Light'ning, and attract its Stroke.
Superior Talents are but shining Snares,
A tempting path, yet strew'd with bitter Cares ;
Malice, or Pride, are Merit's constant foes,
Nought but Obscurity insures Repose ;
Tho' Virtue prompts, or Wisdom guides our aim,
Envy's envenom'd touch can blast our fame :
Not death itself, that Monster can assuage,
Quench her fierce torch, or hush her Serpent's Rage.
The Fault remember'd, when the Man's forgot,
Her baneful Snakes shall haunt that sacred spot,
Hallow'd by grief, where friends or parents mourn,
Hiss near the grave, and twine around the urn.

Sure some strange taste in distant pleasure lies,
We turn indignant from an easy prize ;
In wild anxiety thro' life we roam,
Peace is despis'd, because 'tis found at home.

See

See mad Desire with hasty steps advance,
Darting on every side his eager glance ;
One blessing got is soon insipid grown,
Nothing he values, if 'tis once his own ;
Each splendid blessing, every human toy,
Attracts his wish, and draws his greedy eye ;
He seizes all that tempts on Fortune's road,
Then sinks unequal to the various load.

Th' Historic page lies open to the eye,
And of this truth, can various proofs supply ;
That those who hope with happiness to meet,
Must turn to find her, to that calm retreat,
Where far from Scenes, where busy fools resort,
With Peace, and Indolence, she keeps her Court.

If princely rule, or empire unconfin'd,
Could fix the wish, or satisfy the mind ;
See cloth'd in Majesty's most ample Robe,
Spain's famous Monarch, Lord of half the Globe :

Yet

Yet preſt by Care, he ſighs beneath a Crown,
And longs to lay the ſplendid burden down ;
To Philip's ſteady hand the Sceptre yields,
And far from Care, near fair Placentia's fields,
A Convent's ſolitary ſhade he fought,
Where Contemplation dwells, and pious thought.
Yet in his boſom glows a latent fire,
By turns a Sage, a Monarch, or a Friar ;
Thro' all the maze of changing thought it works,
Plays round his heart, and in each viſion lurks.

For this the Coffin *, and the mournful Heſe,
Are brought to grace his fancy's ſolemn farce :
Aloft to Heav'n thick Clouds of Incenſe roll,
And ſounds funereal ſtrike the raptur'd Soul ;
Priests clad in black, a venerable train !
Display the pomp of death without its pain :

* Charles the Vth had his obſequies performed in his life-time, and aſſiſted at them.

While awful strains from fable Altars rise,
In holy pantomime the Hero lies ;
Affects on all the dreary Scene to smile,
Joins the sad hymn, and lights the funeral pile.

Lo wife Christina ! weary of her State,
And of the tiresome task of being great ;
Averse to Tumults, and to noisy Wars,
Tir'd of rough Heroes, and eternal Jarrs ;
To fair Italia's blissful climes she flew,
And from a Throne, and regal Cares withdrew,
Resolv'd no more, o'er stubborn Swedes to reign,
She fought the Muses, and increas'd their train.

As flames in spiral wavings, still ascend,
So soars Ambition's wish, and knows no end ;
Whate'er the partial hand of Heav'n can grant,
Is but the opening to another want ;
Hope with impatient wings outstrips the Wind,
And leaves calm Thought, and Reason far behind.

Immortal

Immortal Henry ! Britain's warlike boast,
Who led her gallant Chiefs to Gallia's Coast ;
Whilst France to Heav'n address'd the fruitless Vow,
Fortune the Garland wove, to deck thy brow :
Gaul's haughty Genius bends beneath thy Sword,
Her Sceptre yields, and owns Thee for her Lord.
Yet all this blaze of Glory could not save
Thy blooming honours from an early grave !
Toil and ungenial Air, on foreign ground,
Unstrung each nerve : With vernal Laurels crown'd,
On Pain's sad Couch, he droops the languid head,
Fix'd is each pulse, and every hope is fled !
Deform'd with rage, and big with savage deeds,
A dreadful Scene to Henry's death succeeds ;
By Faction fir'd, or by Dissention tore,
Discord alternate shakes each rival Shore :
But stop . . . nor let it seem the gentle Muse,
The praise to Valour sacred, can refuse ;

In peaceful strains, the only means to shew,
What busy horrors from Ambition flow.

May Henry's deeds, in Fame's bright page enroll'd,
To future times in awful song be told !
And let Britannia's latest Sons be taught,
The glorious Acts their early Fathers wrought.

From Scene to Scene, by restless Fancy drove,
Or struggling in the Net his passions wove ;
The active Soul no tranquil moment knows,
Throngs eager forward, and abhors repose :
Yet all the blessings Heav'n to Man design'd,
Within a narrow circle are confin'd ;
And spite of all that soaring Pride can teach,
The good it means us, lies within our reach.

When wild Confusion rules with horrid sway,
The trembling Muses wing their timid way,
The social Virtues follow in their train ;
These are thy offspring, Peace ! and seek thy Reign.

'Twas

'Twas the unruly busy thought gave birth,
To half those Evils which infect the Earth ;
Man never easy in his proper feat,
Acts daring Crimes, and Flatt'ry calls him great ;
But Reason's piercing look, with eye severe,
Spies Pride and Envy thro' the Veils they wear ;
Sees bustling Saints in holy mischief deal,
And desolate whole Nations out of Zeal ;
Grasp without trembling Heav'n's avenging Rod,
As if 'twas Man's to vindicate a God !

What frantic passion led th' intrepid Swede,
On hostile Shores, 'midst barbarous foes to bleed ?
Far wiser sure, had he in tranquil ease,
Plann'd gentle Laws, and smiling arts of Peace :
Council and Wisdom with true Courage dwell,
Hero's by these untaught to Madmen swell.

E

Thus

Thus Alexander eager for a Name,
O'erturn'd whole Cities, victims to his Fame ;
A new Achilles, ardent to destroy,
Astonish'd Nations dread the fate of Troy ;
Thro' Lands remote he founds the swift alarm,
Whole Nations sink beneath his dreadful arm ;
The peaceful Shore, the cultivated Plain,
Swells a red Mountain, reeking with the Slain ;
At ev'ry step, the dreadful havoc spreads,
And Desolation follows as he treads !
But He whose awful frown shakes Heav'n with fear,
Appals the Conqueror in his fierce Career,
Quick thro' his bosom shoots the glowing pain,
* High beats the fever in each throbbing vein :

* Alexander the Great died of a fever in the prime of life, and in the midst of his conquests.

Its wild extremes he proves by dreadful turns,
Now iced he shivers, and now raving burns ;
Thin flying Mists, and Clouds before him swim,
While Death creeps slowly thro' each stiff'ning limb ;
The direful Sisters cut the vital thread,
And Night eternal closes round his head.
Thus eager mortals toiling to be great,
With headlong steps anticipate their fate.

In the dark windings of a Cromwel's Soul,
What busy schemes of active mischief roll !
Nor check'd by dangers, nor by Conscience aw'd,
With wary steps in crooked paths he trod ;
Till rais'd by crafty Arts he stood alone,
Crush'd regal power, and traml'd on the Throne.
Yet such the fortune of ill gotten Power,
Joy is not his, nor is the peaceful hour ;

Remorse

Remorse and Fear distend his gloomy breast,
Sit on his pillow, and destroy his rest :
By pale Suspicion's icy terrors shook,
He darts the fullen glance, the doubting look ;
Of treacherous friends, or fancied foes afraid,
He loaths Society, and seeks the shade.
But Peace in vain he seeks ; sad forms arise,
And howling Furies follow as he flies.

Often has Truth in pleasing Fiction drest,
The Conflict painted of th' impassion'd breast.
With toil incessant, and eternal thirst,
Sad Sisyphus, and Tantalus are curst ;
One pants, as upwards the vast weight he heaves,
The other gasping courts th' illusive waves :
Thus toiling up the Hill of Life we groan,
While Disappointment backward rolls the Stone ;

Or

Or inly pining in the midst of Joys,
Still as we grasp th' evasive bliss, it flies.

Not so the Man whose placid moments fly,
In pleasing Indolence. With tranquil eye,
He marks the hand of Time, as thro' the bound
Of earth he leads the circling Seasons round :
Patient of evils which he cannot shun,
His days in sweet Serenity move on,
To Care a stranger, undisturb'd he sees
The lamp of Life burn low by slow degrees.

But thus while bor'n on Fancy's wing I rove,
And sportive sing that Indolence I love ;
Not fordid Sloth, but philosophic rest,
The inward Sunshine of th' unruff'd breast ;
Passions just fann'd, not roughen'd by desire,
These are my theme : for these I touch the Lyre.

Far be from me ! the wish to Self confin'd,
The dull stagnation of th' unfeeling mind ;
The earth-born Wretch, amidst Mankind alone,
The Stoic art of freezing Men to Stone.

The real Sage avoids the World's vain noise,
Yet still a Man, he courts its purer Joys ;
Wisdom and Truth are his ; the useful thought,
The act benevolent by Virtue taught.

O sacred Virtue ! at thy sound I feel
Unwonted transports thro' my bosom steal ;
Fain would the Muse with energy divine,
The Verse ennobling glow along the line !
O first, and choicest present to Mankind !
Pure emanation of th' eternal Mind !
Thro' every Age, in every Breast the same,
No doubtful Being, no invented Name ;

Witness

Witness the tear spontaneous taught to flow,
For sorrows not our own, the Strangers wee :
The Joy sincere at sight of others blest,
The patient smile of Goodness, tho' distressed ;
The glow ineffable that fills the Mind,
For noble actions done ; th' inquiry kind,
Where virtuous Want droops with dejected eye,
Sheds the sad tear, and breathes the lonely sigh ;
The heart-exalting bliss from Friendship felt,
When kindred Souls in soft effusion melt ;
The holy Love expansive for our kind,
Like Heav'n's wide look, embracing all Mankind :
These, Virtue, these are thine. But here the Muse,
Unequal to her theme, no more pursues :
Some abler Bard a nobler strain shall raise,
Whilst I in silence meditate thy Praise.

T H E E N D.

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